Temptation

R. T. Williams

Nov. 1943

Effie D. Frye

Bought at
Fonce revival
Waynedale Church
of Nazarene

TEMPTATION

A Neglected Theme

By

Rev. R. T. Williams, D.D.

7th Edition
16th Thousand

Printed in U. S. A.

NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE
2923 Troost Ave., Kansas City, Mo.

Copyright, 1920
Nazarene Publishing House

Contents

An Appreciation..Dr. B. F. Haynes, D.D.

PAGE

A Neglected Theme 9
The Basis of Temptation 19
The Nature of Temptation 27
Process in Temptation 47
How to Resist Temptation 55
Value of Temptation 67
Temptation and the Sanctified 73

An Appreciation

Dr. Williams has done the disciples of our Lord a distinct service in giving in printed form this dissertation on "Temptation." He enters the arena of the daily struggles of the believer and helps him along the most practical and needy lines of his life. Strange indeed that Temptation should ever have become a neglected theme, but it is true, as the author suggests. We admire the clear and logical and discriminating way in which the subject is treated in these pages.

He begins with the *Basis of Temptation,* and next discusses *The Nature of Temptation.* This leads naturally to a discussion in the next chapter of the *Process of Temptation.* This is followed by a chapter on *How to Resist Temptation.*

Then we have in another chapter stressed the *Value of Temptation,* and the discussion closes very properly with a discussion of *Temptation and the Sanctified.* This shows the scope of the discussion and the practical nature of the treatment.

We can not too warmly recommend this dissertation to all young converts. Also it is an admirable booklet to put in the hands of Sunday school pupils and seekers of religion and all serious-minded who desire to understand the wiles of the Devil and the meaning of temptation and the possibilities involved in it. Pastors can wisely distribute it among their members. The subject is of prime importance; the treatment is strong and clear; and the arguments are cogently put and unanswerable. We wish for this booklet a wide circulation.

B. F. HAYNES.

TEMPTATION

A Neglected Theme (Temptation)

JAMES 1:14,15, *"But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*

TEMPTATION is a subject of very great importance to every child of God; therefore, a subject concerning which every one should have a practical knowledge. It is strange and inexplicable that so little is said from the pulpit, and so little written on this theme; and yet such is the case. There are thousands of young converts, and older ones, too, that seriously need help on this feature of their lives; and will gladly read or listen to any word given on this topic.

There are three fundamental reasons why this subject should be carefully stud-

ied, and the lessons taught by it conscientiously observed.

First, temptation is universal. It shows no partiality; it manifests no favoritism; it makes no exceptions. It attacks the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the learned and the illiterate. It is doubtless true that preachers, in their great zeal to see people give themselves to God and start for heaven, often unconsciously and unintentionally make the impression on the minds of honest souls, that after one is saved the battles of life are over, and one will be carried on to heaven without conflicts and desperate struggles and severe temptations. This is a mistake. Let no soul be deceived. Every inch of ground between the moment of surrender to God and the final triumphant entrance into heaven, will be contested by the enemy. He will use every available resource to

sidetrack and destroy a Christian and a Christian life.

The Bible pictures the Christian life as the life of a soldier, or the life of warfare. We are told to put on the whole armor of God, and the armor is described in detail. The Christian life calls forth the heroic within us. "If any will come after me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." It takes more courage and real heroism to follow Jesus Christ, and turn away from the allurements of the world, than it does to bare one's breast to the bullets of an enemy on a field of physical battle. In going to heaven one must travel at right angles with the world, and the opinions of the world, and the desires of the world; and certainly he is contrary always to the wishes and interests of Satan. Consequently, he will be opposed; and he should begin the Christian life with

this idea very distinctly fixed in his mind.

Second, temptation is frequent in all lives being lived for God and the salvation of humanity. Think it not strange when the same temptation is often repeated; and when those appear unexpectedly that you had not had before.

Satan is a being of great power and intelligence, and therefore, a being of very large and extensive resources. In addition to these facts, he has had the experience of wrecking the lives of men since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. People sometimes deceive themselves by vainly imagining that they have already been tried in all conceivable ways. You will often be attacked at an unexpected point, and at a time when you are least expecting a temptation. In the meantime temptation is being constantly repeated at your weakest spot; for it is true that all lives have

some place that is weaker than other places.

Third, temptation is the battleground from which every follower of Jesus Christ comes, either defeated and humiliated, or gloriously triumphant and victorious; and consequently stronger for the next battle. If all the people who have ever been converted had stood true and loyal to God, doubtless by this time, the world would have been evangelized. Many start, but relatively few remain true to the end. The reason is, they go down under the severe tests of temptation, and possibly, in most cases, because they did not have a clear conception of temptation, a knowledge of its nature, and how to successfully meet it.

Not all wilfully turned away from the Christian life, in the sense of doing it deliberately and premeditatedly. In most cases, perhaps, they were taken unawares by some terrible temptation, and under the strain

of the moment gave down, and then became discouraged, and said, "It is no use." Afterward, when you approach these persons, they will tell you that they believe the Bible, and that they were much happier when they were serving God than they are at this present time. When you ask them to try it again, that is, come back to God, they seem afraid to try again, saying they failed once, and fear they may fail again. This all goes to show they did not deliberately choose to go back, but gave up under discouragement when suddenly and severely attacked by temptation.

In this brief discussion of temptation, we wish to confine ourselves to the Christian. There is a sense in which the sinner is tempted to do wrong, which he may not do, from expediency, not wishing to reap the harvest of that sin or wrong, or because he wishes to be respectable. We wish to

brush aside this phase of the subject, as the sinner is living in an entirely different realm from that of the Christian who has chosen a better country for his part, deliberately fighting the battles of temptation, building a Christian character, and winning a crown of life.

There is a strange and unscriptural doctrine taught by some, namely, that doctrine known as "Once in grace always in grace." If this were true there would be no necessity of the study of temptation, for if one could not fall from grace, it would not be necessary to bother about temptation. If a soul could not backslide or apostatize, he would be under the law of necessity, in which case, temptation or not temptation, there would be but one course for him to take, namely, the course of necessity or compulsion. This is not in harmony with freedom of will, not in harmony with the

Scriptures. Temptation is a battleground, and every one will come from this battlefield as a victor or as a conquered victim of Satan, and a slave to sin.

THE BASIS OF TEMPTATION

THE BASIS OF TEMPTATION

The goodness of God has been attacked frequently by the critic of the Bible and the unbeliever because man fell into sin, from his original state of innocence, purity, and happiness. Did God not foresee that man would fall? If He did foresee that man would fall, why did He not make it impossible for man to fall, by changing His plans in man's creation? These are old questions, but they are asked in all ages.

One great writer has observed that God was free to create man or not to create him. God was independent, or rather is independent, needing nothing He did not possess. Why He chose to create man lies within His own sovereign Being. It was His own arbitrary choice, entirely voluntary upon His part. Moreover, He chose

to make man in His own image, a moral being with intellect, sensibility, and will, a free moral agent.

In order to make man a free moral agent, God was obliged to give him the power of choice, and the opportunity of choice. The restraint God placed over man, forbidding him to eat of the fruit of a certain tree, in the Garden of Eden, emphasizes two great truths. First, it reveals God's right to command, and rule over man, and second, it reveals the obligation of man to obey God. Of all the adventures ever made in the universe, God made the greatest when He consented to make man, a being that would have the power to love and obey Him, or to hate and reject Him. It was necessary to make man like this, or to make him to be ruled by necessity. God chose the former. He made a being with the power to love Him, or hate

Him; to accept Him, or reject Him; to serve Him, or withhold his devotion and service.

The crowning glory of man is not that he is a machine compelled to do right, and forced to love God, but that he may choose to serve and love God of his own free and voluntary will. What God wants is not a forced adoration, a forced love, a forced service; what He wants is a free, willing love and worship, voluntarily given. God could not appreciate a love from man that is necessitated, but He does appreciate a heart poured upon Him willingly and freely upon man's part.

The sacredness of this truth is greatly emphasized by the method used by our Lord in establishing His kingdom upon earth. Unlike the governments of man, He did not build His kingdom upon principles of force, not enforcing His laws and will by the

power of the sword. He built on the foundation of love. His followers come after Him, not because they are obliged to do so, but because they love Him, and would rather die with Him than to live without Him. Napoleon said he had destroyed homes, made thousands of widows, and tens of thousands of orphans. He said he had brought nations prostrate at his feet. "Now," said he, "the world hates me, and I am confined and imprisoned. Jesus Christ never drew a drop of blood. He never unsheathed the sword, and yet there are millions that would gladly lay down their lives for Him, and for His kingdom."

God intends that man shall live a physical life, and consequently, He created man with physical desires, appetites, and passions. These are for the preservation, promotion, and propagation of the race. Thus

we have a being with a physical nature, having physical desires, appetites, and passions; an intellectual being with a constitutional hunger for knowledge; a moral being with power to accept God and right, or reject God and do wrong. We wish to show in the next chapter some of the means of temptation and its nature.

THE NATURE OF TEMPTATION

THE NATURE OF TEMPTATION

In a study of the nature of temptation, we reach the heart of our subject. Confusion at this point will lessen the possibility of a clear understanding of any part of the subject. If we do not know something of the nature of temptation, we can not know how to meet it and resist it. It is the opinion of the writer that the most of the explanations by the great thinkers have been so technical at this point they have failed to produce practical results in many cases. It is our desire, therefore, to present the nature of temptation in the most simple and practical way possible to us.

In order to get at the nature of temptation, we wish to call the attention of the reader to the greatest examples of temptation in the Bible. The results of the first

one were disastrous, bringing upon the entire race sin and death. The results of the second one were triumphant, bringing righteousness and life to the race. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." We wish you to notice, also, that these cases are temptations with innocent and holy beings, beings without sin in their natures. The first pair were made holy. To say that Adam was not pure when created is to charge God with creating sin. If He made a being with sin in him, He made the sin possessed by that being. This charge is unscriptural and unreasonable. Therefore the first temptation, from which came the first tragedy of the race, was directed

against a being innocent and pure, a being with a right and normal nature. There is no argument at this point with the second case. No one with reason or common intelligence will assert that Jesus was sinful. He was tempted, but without sin. There was no sin either in His nature or His acts.

Satan, in approaching Eve, appealed to two desires, namely, a physical desire and a mental desire, both of which were constitutional. There was within her an appetite for a good red, ripe, juicy, delicious apple, and a hunger for knowledge. The approach to her was through the avenue of normal, natural desire.

The second case is Jesus in the wilderness, after forty days of fasting and prayer. Satan approaches Jesus through the avenue of desire as he had approached Eve in the garden. First he reminds Jesus that He is hungry. Jesus is asked to turn the stones

before Him into bread. The appeal is to a physical appetite, which at this particular time must necessarily have been very strong. Jesus had been without food forty days. In addition to this fact, it can be truly supposed that His appetites might have been very strong, as He was without disease; a perfectly normal being. Any appetite or feeling natural and normal to men in general must have been fully as strong or stronger in Jesus, who was a perfect manhood, without weakness or abnormality. He was an hungered, and in this state Satan makes his attack upon Him. Second, Satan asks Jesus to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. This would convince the multitudes of His deity. Here is an appeal to another desire, namely, a desire in the heart of Jesus to establish His deity. Did He not have this desire? Indeed He did. The reader will recall the

fact that He never failed to answer a question or an attack that had a bearing upon His deity or divinity. As to other accusations and questions He was often silent, and opened not His mouth. Third, Satan asks Jesus to worship him, and receive the kingdoms of the world as a reward. This is another appeal to a sacred desire. Jesus had come to establish His kingdom in the world. He longed for rule over the hearts of men, to have their obedience, love, and adoration.

In each case He says "No" to the tempter. He refuses to satisfy the desires to which Satan appeals. This leads us to where we can now examine the text in James, the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the first chapter. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust [desire], and enticed. Then when lust [desire] hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin,

and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The text makes clear the following facts, to which we wish especially to call the attention of the reader:

1. All temptation has within it the element of desire.

James says a man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust. The word lust in this translation does not reveal the real meaning of this text, as the word lust is now understood to refer usually to base, sensual, social sin. This is the modern idea of the word's meaning. The text is much clearer if the word "desire," or "strong desire" is substituted. The Greek word here is *epithumia,* which means desire or strong desire. This rendering is in perfect harmony with the original Greek. Having in mind the word desire instead of lust, read the text, and the meaning is much clearer. "A man is tempted when he is drawn away

of his own desire, and enticed." This is the real meaning of the text.

We wish to repeat the statement that there is in all temptation the element of desire. Without desire there can be no temptation. Do not be afraid to admit this fact. It will not lead you astray. It is the only way to get at the true nature of temptation. One could not be tempted to eat a food that does not exist, one of which he had never heard. You can not be tempted to take that for which there is absolutely no desire within you. You could not be tempted to eat sawdust, as you have no desire for it. A man who never used tobacco, and who has not inherited an appetite for it, can not be tempted from the sense of an appetite for tobacco. He has no appetite for it. If he uses it, there must be some other desire to influence him till he will have developed a direct desire for tobacco.

Eve was tempted to take the forbidden fruit, for she had eaten fruit before, and had a distinct appetite for it; an appetite that was constitutional and normal; an appetite for food which is necessary for the preservation of the race. Again, she was tempted to eat for she was told that the eating of this fruit would bring knowledge. She had within her a desire, a strong desire to know, a desire for knowledge. This gave strength to the temptation, which was twofold, namely, an appeal to physical appetite, which is constitutional, and also an appeal to the desire for knowledge, which, too, is constitutional. Both desires were a very part of her nature.

The temptation of Jesus was made possible because He had a desire for food. He was human, with a normal physical body that needed food, that hungered for food, that lived upon food. If we forget the

humanity of Jesus, we lose the value of this great fight, in our interpretation of His temptation. Second, the temptation was made possible because He desired to establish His deity. He was the Son of God, and knew He could get a following only by convincing men of this fact. His interest in this matter is manifested in the question He once asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" The third phase of His temptation was possible because Jesus desired to establish His kingdom among men. Satan offered Him the kingdoms of the world if He would fall down and worship him. Again Jesus refuses to satisfy a desire. Satan had exhausted his resources, and withdrew for a season.

2. Desire is not necessarily sinful within itself.

It was not wrong for Eve to desire de-

licious fruit to satisfy a normal hunger for food. Nor was it a sin for her to desire to be wise, to have knowledge. It was evidently not wrong for Jesus to desire food when He was hungry, nor wrong for Him to want to convince men of His deity, nor a sin for Him to strongly desire to establish His kingdom among men, over their hearts and lives.

It is not a sin for a healthy, robust, rosy-cheeked boy, whose very being tingles with life, to desire a red, juicy, and delicious apple, or a piece of well-cooked beefsteak. It is not a sin for a healthy man, full of life and vigor, to feel the waves of passion within his body, but it is a sin to break over lawful bounds within or without.

3. Sin enters with a decision to satisfy desire by unlawful means or illegitimate methods.

Desire is God-implanted, constitutional,

natural, and useful. Desires are often abnormal, having been warped and distorted by sin inherited or committed, but constitutional desire is not to be looked upon as sinful within itself.

Here is where lust or desire conceives. The harm is not in the desire for fruit, but in the consent to satisfy that desire unlawfully. Desire for money to feed yourself and family is not a sin, but it is a sin to consent to satisfy that desire for money by taking an unlawful method for doing it. It is not a sin to feel the flash of passion, but when one looketh upon a woman to lust or desire after her, to consent to satisfy his desire if he had the opportunity, he hath already committed adultery in his heart.

No act can have a moral quality till the will has entered into the act. There is no virtue till the will has decided upon benevolent attitudes and conduct, neither is there

guilt in the truest sense of the word till the will has made a choice of wrong, with right and wrong both before it. There is, of course, taught in the Bible a sin of ignorance, which is covered by the atonement.

It is sometimes said that a person has conflicting motives. This is not possible. There may be two desires in the mind contending each against the other for mastery, for expression, and for extension into conduct. In this case it is evident that the will must finally decide the matter, and settle the dispute between these desires. When the will does act, it must decide in favor of one of these contending desires, and against the other one. When this is done, the will clearly unites with one of the desires. It can not unite with both of them.

The union of the will with a desire constitutes a motive. As the will can not unite with two opposing desires, but can unite

with only one of them, it becomes clear that there can be but one motive resulting. Therefore, one can not have two conflicting motives in the mind at the same time. The will can not and does not take sides against itself. This would be suicidal.

In the formation of a motive, that is by having the will take sides with some desire, if that motive is now to satisfy the desire with means forbidden, such as consent to satisfy hunger by stealing, or to satisfy passion by committing fornication or adultery, to get knowledge by unlawful means, the soul comes under condemnation. Desire hath conceived. The agent is guilty in the sight of God, whether he ever executes the deed to which the motive points, or not, He has consented. His will has acted. The motive has a moral quality, and surely the deed will have if ever executed.

Remember that you retain your integ-

rity so long as you say "No" to a desire that can not be satisfied by lawful means, and "Yes" to desire that is directing you toward legal and upright conduct. Some one may ask what we will do with a case when a person actually desires to do evil. To this we will reply, that a person in this condition has already given himself over to sin and the Devil, and makes a case entirely outside of this discussion.

Let us notice a simple example of temptation. A boy stands before a fruit stand hungry. His appetite which within itself is good and holy, says, "Apple! apple! I want an apple." But honesty, a desire to do right, says, "Go hungry! Go hungry! Be a gentleman." What happens? The will acts finally. It says, "No, appetite. If I had a dime I would buy you satisfaction, but you must not and shall not be satisfied wrongfully. You would better be hungry

forever and be right." The boy remains honest, he has won, he has the approval of God and his own conscience. If he should consent to satisfy that hunger for an apple by taking one and not paying for it, in this case desire conceives, a wrong motive is formed, and the boy in his moral nature and in the sight of God falls, and is guilty before the bar of his own conscience.

Let us sum up the truths we have considered. All temptation has within it the element of desire. Desire within itself may be holy and perfectly legitimate. Sin enters when the will consents to satisfy a desire by an unlawful or wrong method. The female desire and the male will unite, conceiving. Desire can not conceive until she unites with the male will. When lust or desire hath conceived, hath united with the will, she, or it, bringeth forth sin. This figure may be faulty, and may be criticized, but it car-

ries the main idea, and makes truth clearer, which will, we trust, create a willingness to forgive the faults of the figure.

Let us now follow the text a little further, making a few more observations. When the will and desire have united, consenting to a wrongful method of satisfaction, desire hath conceived, and bringeth forth sin. The person is now under condemnation. He has sinned in his heart and lost the smiles of God. Sin has been brought forth, and when it is finished, it results in death. Is it as bad to consent to sin, as it is to put the motive into execution, and do the act, whatever it might be? By no means. If you sin in your heart, no one is directly wronged except yourself. If you do an act of sin, in most cases at least others are involved, or at least the cause is openly injured together with one's own self. If the sin is only in the heart, you can get

right, having no one to deal with except a kind God; but if you go into open and outbroken sin, usually other persons must be dealt with in the matter; at least if they are sinned against. A sin of the heart is bad enough. It brings the curse of God, it costs the approbation of your own soul, it weakens the manhood, undermines the strength of the will, and may lead to hell. Be right inside, and you will likely always be right outside. Be true to yourself and you will be true to others. Conform the heart to the will of God, and the life will be adjusted naturally.

Oh, for wills that are set to do the bidding of God, for hearts that are fixed, for souls that are so pure within that no sin or stain can be found within. The blood of Jesus can make it so, and will for him who says "Yes" to God.

PROCESS IN TEMPTATION

PROCESS IN TEMPTATION

Man's whole being is supposed to be governed by certain laws, which if obeyed, will promote his best interests. There are laws of hygiene for the body, laws of mind for the intellect, and spiritual laws for the soul. There is a definite process in the work of temptation. There may be many kinds of temptation, and there are. Satan may try us on scores of different lines, and employ many agencies; but with the variety of kinds of temptation, and degrees of temptation there is a sameness in the general process of approach, and method of attack.

First, let us notice the attention. One psychologist defines attention as the focusing of consciousness. Satan got the attention of Eve. He got her to look at the for-

bidden fruit, and then to meditate and reason concerning the results from the eating of it; that is, the false conclusions concerning the results. He called her attention to its appearance, and no doubt to its beauty, its attractiveness. It is the look, the sound, the smell, the touch, the attention, that forms the first stages of temptation. It is the sense of beauty, and worth of an article, the attractiveness that get hold of the attention. This is the beginning of temptation. A man approaches you and calls you an ugly name, another meets you who owes you a just debt and refuses to pay you. A man harms your family, or injures your good name. Their conduct attracts your attention, and soon you are thinking about them, meditating, condemning their conduct and pitying yourself. Satan will endeavor to get you to wish them evil, which will mean your own downfall, in-

wardly if not outwardly. Think no evil.

Here is the danger of the billboard, the movie, the picture that would open the way for Satan to enter. Watch the attention. When your attention begins to be focused upon any object that would lead in a wrong direction, catch yourself at once. Turn the attention. You are master. You own and control your own thinking. Direct the mind aright.

Second, Satan, through the power of attention, seeks to arouse desire in the heart and mind, with the hope that he may influence the soul to seek satisfaction for that desire by some wrong method. It may be a desire to possess something of value, a desire for food or for money, a desire to protect what you consider a personal right. It might be a desire to see an evildoer punished, which could be right and proper; but there is a way for the punishment to come,

and that way is not by personal revenge. This is the wrong method. The desire aroused may be good within itself that arises through attention, but it is to be guarded.

Third, there is the further effort on the part of Satan through the attention, and the desire aroused through the attention, to influence the will to act. If he can get the will to act uniting with a desire or feeling to satisfy that feeling or desire unlawfully, he has succeeded in his object, namely, to get one to do wrong, and thus lose the smiles and approval of God, and of his own soul.

Men can not save themselves, but let us not forget that man must co-operate in his own salvation, and let us not underestimate the position the will has in our getting saved and in keeping saved. We must say "Yes" to God when we get right, and the will must

keep on saying "Yes." That is the attitude of man toward the gospel and the will of God, if he hopes to keep saved. It costs no less to keep right than it does to get right. Opposition toward sin, and consent toward God are ever necessary.

HOW TO RESIST TEMPTATION

HOW TO RESIST TEMPTATION

How to successfully resist temptation is a matter of fundamental importance to every child of God. If we fail here we lose the fight and miss the crown. It will encourage us always to remember that God has promised that He will not suffer us to be tempted beyond our strength to bear it, and that He will always make a way of escape for us. It has been stated already that God made Adam a free moral agent and consequently gave him the power of choice and the opportunity to choose. With the power to fall, Adam also had the power to stand. There are always things to discourage and depress us, but there are at the same time things always to help us. Jesus proved to us that we can stand. It is to be observed that He did not employ more

divinity, more divine power in His own fight than He will give any poor struggling soul in the fight with temptation. All the grace we need we can have. He will give sufficient grace to enable us to stand regardless of the weakness of humanity resulting from the fall. He knows how to succor them that are tempted. He has the wisdom, the grace, and the experience, too, with which to help us, having been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

We have already covered some ground that will give us an idea of the best way to meet temptation. The main entrance for temptation is at the door of attention. Therefore, we should always guard this door with great care. Do not permit the attention to be centered upon any person, object, or mental picture that would have a tendency to arouse a feeling or desire that would if satisfied lead one astray. Often

we see and hear more than is good for us. If some one makes an ugly remark about you, refuse to give it your attention. It might hurt you. Forget it. If you see some one act in a way that is contemptible and reprehensible do not allow yourself to feed mentally upon it unless there is hope to remedy the conditions. It has been said that there are two things about which we should never worry. One is the thing that we can help. If we can help it, do so, and don't worry about it. The other one is something we can not help. If we can not help it, there is no use worrying. The same principle can be applied about the unpleasant conduct of people whom you know.

Be armed against temptation by having the mind made up already as to what course you will take should such a temptation arise. But we might not know what temptation will arise. In all cases, however, we can have

the mind settled to take the side of right to the extent of our knowledge of right in the case. We heard a man say, "Well, I do not know what I would do if a certain temptation should overtake me." That man was defeated before the battle. He should have come to a decision. Never admit that any temptation could be too strong for you if God adds His grace. It will be hard enough even then at times to keep the proper balance and poise under test. Never entertain a possibility of going back. Start to heaven to go on till you get there. Let the mind be settled on two points. First, be fixed in that you will never do wrong if you know it, and second, that you will never turn back, however many trials and discouragements you meet.

A fixed mind is the greatest stay for the soul outside of the power and grace of God. We have no doubt that the purpose of

Joseph was fixed not to sin against his God long before the agent of the Devil made her attack upon him. Instantly he made his escape because the matter was not a debatable question. A closed mind is a great asset in the matter of meeting wrong.

Again, crush any desire that arises in the body or the mind or the soul, that you know could not be satisfied without an act known to be questionable. Let no desire get too strong before you undertake to subdue it. The mistake made by most people is in seeing how far they can go without doing wrong before they check the desires or feelings.

It is a fatal thing to play with temptation. There is usually a time when any temptation could be easily overcome, but there is a later stage when a person often finds himself well-nigh defeated before he begins to assert his power of resistance.

Say "No," and say it at once, and the fight is over, or at least you are strengthened for the next attack of the same character. Any intelligent or well informed soul can usually tell and that almost instantly whether a desire arising can be satisfied properly. If it can not be so satisfied within legal and moral bounds, crush it, and crush it at once.

Again, watch the will to see to it that you do not consent to anything that is wrong, or that is even questionable. Avoid the very appearance of evil. Regardless of the degree of the intensity of temptation you have not lost your integrity, unless you have consented to wrong. You are still approved of God. Men can not avoid being tempted, but they can all refuse to yield to temptation. Satan may put evil thoughts in the mind, but you have the power to dismiss them immediately, refusing to harbor them or to feed the mind upon them.

There is an important fact to be noticed in this connection, namely, that one is weakened by temptation, or is left stronger. The result that follows depends entirely upon the attitude we take toward the temptation. Resistance convinces the soul of its power to win, and lessens the dread of temptation, and increases the power of the soul over the desire that was the basis of the temptation. A temptation resisted grows weaker each time, and the soul correspondingly stronger. A temptation yielded to becomes stronger, and the soul weakened for the next fight. One of the alarming results following defeat is a tendency for one to lose confidence in himself, even losing faith in his power to stick to anything. Don't give up, even if you do not always win in the fight. Try it again. Never give up. If you start to heaven and fall down every ten feet, always try to fall face

forward, and get up at once and try it again. Let the mind be set to get the goal. That is the main thing.

Lastly, we win by faith in God. Man is not able of himself to solve his problems, and resist all temptations. God has promised not to leave us alone. "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." We are told in the fourth chapter of the Book of James, to submit ourselves to God, as well as to resist the Devil. This is our hope. The power of God is sufficient for any and every occasion that overtakes us. We should have faith in His goodness, believing He is too good to permit us to suffer beyond that which is working for our own well being. We should have faith in His wisdom, believing that God is too wise to make a mistake in His care and command over us.

We should have faith in His power to keep us in the midst of the most trying condition. Have faith in God. Others may fail. He can not fail. In all the centuries of the world not one word of His promises has ever failed. He promised to keep that which we have committed unto Him. He will never suffer one of His promises to be unfulfilled.

THE VALUE OF TEMPTATION

THE VALUE OF TEMPTATION

Temptation has its place in our lives or God would not permit it. Our Lord is kind, good, wise, too much interested in the lives and souls of men to permit a condition that would ruin them. There was a time when some of us thought that the main thing in this life was to be happy and contented. This is a mistake. We once wondered why God permitted some people to be poor or sick. We have since come to the conclusion that God's main thought for us is not immediate happiness. His great desire and plan for us is the building of character within us. If poverty or sickness will aid Him in His object, He will gladly employ such agencies.

Temptation, the exercise of the will, decision in the right direction make character.

Kind in character can be had without temptation, but degree can be had only through trials and temptations. Milton said that virtue had no right to be called such till it had met its foe in open and fair conflict, and had vanquished it. We know that the Lord puts great stress upon overcoming, being faithful to the end. The inspired writer gives us a picture of heaven, in which he pays especial attention to those who had come up through great tribulation. Heaven will be richer and sweeter to us for having been tried and tempted here. Weaklings and cowards will all be in hell. Only the bravest, and truest will enter heaven. The fight for the goal will prepare them to enjoy the presence of God, and appreciate the blessings of the new Jerusalem.

The struggle for an education rewards the student in building for him a strong manhood. This is no small part of the ben-

efit of school days. The diploma is not all, the man possessing the diploma is a result. Just to get to heaven and sit down to rest and enjoy heaven is not enough, there must be a preparation of one's own self for his surrounding. Without holiness no one can see the Lord, nor would one want to see the Lord without this necessary preparation. It is also true that temptation has its place in building character that will glorify God, and appreciate, and enjoy fully the glories of the next world.

Oh, for a character that will shine in the firmaments of God like a star of the first magnitude! Can this be bought? No. It must be obtained through the atonement of Jesus Christ, and achieved through trials and temptations.

TEMPTATION AND THE SANCTIFIED

TEMPTATION AND THE SANCTIFIED

The erroneous idea is very persistent that the sanctified teach the impossibility of temptation of those who claim the experience of holiness. This has never been taught by any recognized man. In fact, I do not believe it has ever been taught by any one within the holiness movements of the earth. The fact is, the cleaner one is, the purer is his life, the closer he tries to walk with God, the harder and the more desperately will Satan fight him in order to destroy his soul and break down the influence of his life.

As long as we are human, so long will we be tempted. But, thank God, there is a power given from above that makes us more than conquerors. We can not escape being tempted, but we are not forced to yield.

There is a life better than sinning and repenting every day. There is victory within and without.

The sanctified person has a great advantage over the unsanctified in the matter of temptation. Not in the number of temptations, as it is possible that Satan will try harder to break down a sanctified life; and, too, the sanctified person is opposed and persecuted more by the people, even in some cases apparently good people, than the unsanctified person is.

The advantage in favor of the sanctified is in the inner condition of the soul. The justified are on God's side, they are saved, they hate sin, and they are living for the next world. They are not of this world, but they are fighting the carnal mind. In conversion the carnal mind is conquered, but not destroyed. There is therefore a struggle not only with outside influences, but a

fight to keep this inner enemy down, and conquered. This fallen nature, this inbred sin throws its weight of influence with any desire that would tend to lead one wrong. This sinful self is against God and the efforts of the justified man to obey God.

The sanctified man does not have this alien enemy within him to take sides against him in the battles with temptation. His fight within is only with a human nature. Instead of a carnal nature within him to aid the enemy without, he has the Holy Ghost enthroned within without a rival, having a pure heart filled with God. It is consequently easier for him to live the Christian life and to be an overcomer. His sinful self has been crucified, and his natural, legitimate self is to be kept under control of the Spirit of God. It is clear what Paul meant when he said he was crucified with Christ, and yet at another time he asserts that he

must keep his body under. One self was killed, and the other self was consecrated to God.

It has been understood by some that there is a difference between the outer life of a justified man and the outer life of a sanctified man. This could not be. There is but one standard for Christians. All must live in obedience to the Word and the will of God. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." "He that is a friend to the world is the enemy of God." The unsanctified person lives the Christian life with a sinful nature warring against the law of God, and opposing the will of God. This makes it harder to resist temptation. The sanctified person lives the Christian life freed from this fallen nature, with a power and victory within his soul unknown to the other person.

Reader, you will have enough to meet after you have sought the fulness of God, and obtained purity of heart through the baptism with the Holy Ghost. You need all the help you can get. Tarry in Jerusalem till He comes. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you." This is what we need. Not to be protected from the temptations of life, but a power with which to resist them and overcome them.

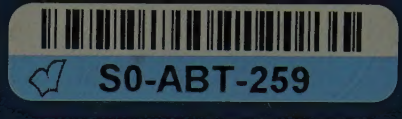
Oh, child of God, do not forget that the crown is for him who continues to the end. The runner for the prize does not win unless he runs the last mile. This one mile is necessary if the other miles covered are to count. He that quits before he reaches, before he wins the prize, has lost all. What he has done avails him nothing.

Do not get the idea that the whole Christian life is an unpleasant toilsome warfare.

It is a fight, but a glorious fight. It is a battle, but there is victory all through it to thrill you with glory and joy such as the world never feels. In this world of war there is always perfect peace, in the midst of sorrow there is the fulness of joy, in the midst of poverty we are made rich, in the midst of temptation there is victory and satisfaction.

This life will soon be over. At best it is short, and full of disappointment, and uncertainty, but there is another life. There is a country where death is not known. There are no graveyards on the hillsides of glory, no shrouds, no tears, nor broken hearts, and separations. Heaven will be cheap at any cost. But the service of God is better here, and the battles against temptations, even if there were no heaven to be gained. But there is a heaven, and it is not very far away.

"Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses. let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."


S0-ABT-259